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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-fourth session

Observer status for the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in the General Assembly

Letter dated 10 September 1999 from the representatives of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that you include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Observer status for the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in the General Assembly". Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution (see annexes I and II).

We further have the honour to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Josefa Guilhermina **Coelho da Cruz**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Angola to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Gelson **Fonseca** Jr.
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

(*Signed*) José Luis **Leão Monteiro**
Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations

(*Signed*) João Soares **da Gama**
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(*Signed*) Carlos **Dos Santos**
Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations

(*Signed*) António **Monteiro**
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

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Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations

Annex I

[Original: English]

Explanatory memorandum

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) was created on 17 July 1996, when the Heads of State and Government of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and São Tome and Principe met in Lisbon and decided to provide a response to the aspirations of and appeals from the approximately 200 million people who consider the Portuguese language not only a means of communication, but also both an historic link and a common heritage nurtured by their friendly relationship throughout the centuries.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries was constituted in the light of the immutable values of peace, democracy and the rule of law, of human rights, development and social justice, and bearing in mind the sovereign equality of States, the non-interference in their internal affairs and the respect for their territorial integrity.

The Heads of State and Government of the seven Portuguese-speaking countries, faithfully interpreting the vocation and the will of their peoples, considered it imperative to:

- *Consolidate* the national and multinational cultural reality that confers upon the Portuguese-speaking countries an identity of their own, while reflecting the special character of their relationship and the experience of a fruitful concerted action and cooperation that has been built up over the years;
- *Enhance* a progressive international assertion of the Portuguese-speaking countries as a whole, which, although geographically separated, are identified by their common language;
- *Reaffirm* the commitment to strengthen their ties of solidarity and cooperation by taking concerted initiatives designed to promote the economic and social development of their countries and to further develop the assertion and dissemination of the Portuguese language.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries is therefore determined to achieve the following objectives, as enunciated in its constitutive declaration:

- To contribute to the reinforcement of the human ties, solidarity and brotherhood among all peoples for whom the Portuguese language is one of the pillars of their specific identity and, accordingly, to promote ways and means to facilitate the movement of the citizens of member countries within the Community area;
- To encourage the dissemination and enrichment of the Portuguese language by further developing and strengthening the institutions that have been or will be established for that purpose, in particular the International Portuguese Language Institute;
- To enhance the cultural exchange and the dissemination of the intellectual and artistic creation within the framework of the Portuguese language by making use of all means of communication and of the internal cooperation mechanisms;
- To endeavour to establish in certain member countries concrete forms of cooperation between the Portuguese language and other national languages in the fields of research and enhancement;

- To widen the cooperation among the member countries in the field of political and diplomatic concerted action, particularly within the framework of international organizations, so as to give an ever greater expression to their common interests and needs within the international community;
- To encourage the development of parliamentary cooperation among the member countries;
- To develop the economic and entrepreneurial cooperation among the member countries and to enhance the existing potential by drawing up and implementing projects of common interest, exploring, to this end, the various forms of bilateral, trilateral and multilateral cooperation;
- To give a new impetus to and to intensify the cooperation in the academic field, as well as in vocational training and in the various sectors of scientific research and technology, aiming at a growing enhancement of their human and natural resources, and to promote and reinforce the training policies of officials;
- To mobilize internal and external efforts and resources aimed at assisting in the reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes, as well as in the humanitarian aid and emergency actions for the member countries;
- To promote the coordination of the activities of the various public agencies and private bodies, economic associations and non-governmental organizations that are engaged in the development of the cooperation among the member countries;
- To promote, in regard to the international commitments undertaken by member countries, measures designed to overcome the problems faced by the immigrant communities in the member countries, as well as to coordinate and foster cooperation in the field of immigrant policies;
- To encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the aim of protecting and preserving the environment in the member countries and achieving sustainable development;
- To promote cooperative action between member countries and multilateral coordination with a view to ensuring full respect for human rights, both in member countries and all over the world;
- To promote measures, particularly in the pedagogical and judicial fields, with a view to eradicating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia;
- To promote and foster measures designed to effectively improve the living conditions of the child and to ensure his/her harmonious development, in the light of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- To promote the implementation of specific projects of cooperation, with a view to strengthening the social condition of women, thereby recognizing the crucial role they perform for the well-being and development of society;
- To foster and promote exchanges of young people, for training and the exchange of experiences, by implementing specific programmes, particularly in the fields of education, culture and sports.

The Statutes of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries summarize the above in three general objectives: concerted action among its members at both the political and diplomatic level, particularly with the aim of asserting their presence in the international fora; cooperation, particularly in the economic, social, cultural, legal and scientific spheres; implementation of projects designed to promote and disseminate the Portuguese language.

In order to carry out its tasks, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries has the following organs:

- The Conference of Heads of State and Government, the highest organ of the Community, which meets every two years, electing the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary;
- The Council of Ministers, consisting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and External Relations of the seven member States, which meets once a year, coordinating the activities of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and approving the budget;
- The Standing Committee for Consultation, consisting of one representative from each of the member States, which meets once a month, monitoring observance by the Executive Secretariat of the decisions and recommendations from the Conference and the Council of Ministers;
- The Executive Secretariat, which is the central executive body of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, implementing the decisions of the other organs, drawing up the programmes of the Community and satisfying itself that they are implemented. The Executive Secretary, assisted by a Deputy Executive Secretary, both elected to hold office, in rotation, for a term of two years, which may be extended for one further term of two years only. Its headquarters are located in Lisbon.

Decisions of the organs and institutions of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries are taken by consensus by all member States.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries has set up a Special Fund, aimed exclusively at providing financial support for practical activities undertaken within the Community. The Special Fund is financed by public or private contributions provided on a voluntary basis.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries is above all an institutionalized and permanent forum for dialogue and cooperation among the member States, dialogue that involves not only the States and the public bodies, but also the civil societies.

In fact, since the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries was constituted, it has increasingly mobilized cooperation among the public administrations of the member countries, in their various sectors, as well as among the courts, the parliaments and several entities representing professions and other sectors of the lusophone civil societies, which have set up a series of meetings and initiatives that take place on a regular basis.

Cooperation with other international organizations also constitutes a major concern of the Community. There have been mutual steps towards closer cooperation taken by the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and several international organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the International Organization for Migration, which admitted the Community as an observer, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

At the political and diplomatic level, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries has enhanced extensive and permanent contacts among the seven lusophone countries, aimed at an effective and coherent approach in the international arena. Questions such as the war in Angola, East Timor and the recent crisis of Guinea-Bissau were the context of interventions by the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, guided by

the international imperatives of peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Bearing in mind the historical, linguistic and cultural ties that have bound East Timor to the members of the Co...munity for hundreds of years, the last Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Praia, in July 1998, approved observer status for East Timor in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and conceded to the territory the status of invited observer in the Community, while its representatives participated in the Conference in that capacity.

In Guinea-Bissau, the results of the concerted action between the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the Economic Community of West African States made possible the re-establishment of the peace in that country, a fact which has been internationally acknowledged, in particular by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his welcoming statement of 27 August 1998.

Following its contribution to the resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries is participating in the Programme of National Reconciliation and rebuilding of Guinea-Bissau, launched by the Government of National Unity, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and, in this context, has already taken part in the preparatory round table promoted by UNDP in Geneva, in May 1999, with a view to responding to the more urgent needs of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

In order to pursue with an ever greater efficiency, the above-mentioned objectives and activities of common endeavour, particularly with a view to enhancing the cooperation between both organizations, as well as with the various agencies of the United Nations system, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries considers that the status of observer in the United Nations General Assembly would be extremely beneficial to the organization.

Consequently, the Standing Committee for Consultation of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, acting in accordance with the decisions taken at the meeting of the Council of Ministers, held in Praia, in July 1998, asked that the necessary steps be taken in order that the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries be granted observer status in the General Assembly.

Annex II

[Original: English]

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that the purposes of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, as enunciated in its constitutive declaration, are consistent with those of the United Nations,

Considering that, accordingly, it is mutually advantageous to provide for cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries,

Taking note of the desire of the Community for the establishment of that cooperation,

1. *Decides* to invite the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to implement the present resolution.